Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training: A Summit of the Americas Initiative

Design Group Meeting Report Central American CETT

Work Order #20: Human Resources Improvement Policies

June 26-27, 2002

Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training: A Summit of the Americas Initiative

Second Design Group Meeting Report June 26-27, 2002 Miami, Florida

Background

On April 18, 2002 ministry of education (MOE) officials from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico, together with representatives of eight institutions from Central America, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico, met to discuss the development of the Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT) in Central America that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is implementing. This group of representatives of Central American governments and institutions agreed to designate a smaller group, which met May 29-31 in Miami, Florida, to decide on a framework for the program, including the design and coordination elements of the CETT. At the May meeting it was agreed that the smaller group, with the addition of technical participants from each institution, would meet again June 26-27 in Miami to further discuss the design and coordination for the first year of funding for the Central American CETT and to elaborate further proposal-writing responsibilities among the institutions. USAID will receive the proposal from the consortium of institutions outlining activities to be completed in the first year of program funding.

Participants

Ministry representatives from beneficiary countries did not attend this second design meeting. The participants in this meeting were the same representatives from each of the consortium institutions that attended the May design meeting, along with technical specialists that some institutions had already assigned to participate in writing the section of the proposal on their respective program component. The participants were: Roberto Moreno, Yetilú de Baessa, and Jaqueline García of Del Valle University of Guatemala (UVG); Ramón Salgado, Ricardo Morales, and Marina Chávez of the National Pedagogical University Francisco Morazán (UPN) in Honduras; Joaquín Samayoa of the Business Foundation for Educational Development (FEPADE) in El Salvador; Radhamés Mejía, Liliana Montenegro, and Norma Mena of the Pontificial Catholic University Mother and Teacher (PUCMM) in the Dominican Republic; and Jorge Durán and Alejandro Acuña of the Latin American Institute of Educational Technology (ILCE), an international organization in Mexico. Sandra Tejadilla and Dalila Pérez, of the Public Education Secretariat (SEP), and Yolanda de la Garza, of the National Pedagogical University (UPN) of México, represented their country in its capacity as partner with the U.S. government in the CETT program.

David Evans and Evelyn Rodríguez-Pérez attended from USAID in Washington, DC. Antonieta Harwood, Mary Faith Mount-Cors and Asunción Sanz attended from Creative Associates International, Inc. Alan Hurwitz facilitated the meeting.

Process

The discussion during the two-day meeting focused on the following subjects:

- -The integration of the new participants into the process and dynamics of the CETT design and preparation for writing the proposal.
- -The adoption of an integrated conceptual framework.
- -Review and adjustment of the roles and responsibilities of the institutions participating in the consortium.
- -Review, discussion, and clarification of each institution's responsibilities to develop the section of the proposal on its respective component.
- -Guidelines, format and timeline for writing the proposal.
- -Strengthening of the relationships among the institutions forming the consortium to facilitate the implementation of the program.

David Evans stressed how well positioned the Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training program is to the present general political predisposition towards education. President Bush is very interested in including education in his presidential agenda and in making funds available for educational programs. USAID is now preparing a \$225 million education project (\$75 million for three years, starting in 2004) focused on workforce development that starts in primary education and continues through secondary education.

While political emphasis is being placed on education in the U.S., it is imperative to try to extend the momentum to Central American countries, and keep ministries of education and the CETT participating institutions (national centers) informed of the program's progress. To this end, USAID will send a letter stating which countries will be hosting the pilots. The letter will also include information about the national centers' participation in the first year of the program through activities such as technical discussion of the program, research development, and the provision of experts to work in gathering and chronicling regional best practices.

A simultaneous public announcement of the Central American CETT will be made to the press in each consortium member country. To coordinate this activity, USAID will send a letter to the local USAID missions and U.S. ambassadors announcing that the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and UPN will take place in Honduras.

David Evans announced that the Public Education Secretariat of Mexico would be a partner, acting as a resource to the Central American CETT, offering their expertise, personnel and materials to the members of the consortium.

Below is a complete list of agreements made at this second design meeting:

- FEPADE will assume responsibility for the social marketing component and will submit a strategic plan for the first year of the program and a plan to transfer responsibility to the national centers.
- FEPADE is responsible for proposing and coordinating the regional strategies to establish alliances with the private sector. See annex no. 1 with the new matrix.
- With the purpose of improving communication channels, the UPN will acknowledge receipt of all the correspondence received.
- Every country will identify a contact person within the Ministry of Education to facilitate the ongoing communication flow.
- USAID announced the role of the Secretary of Public Education of Mexico as a partner in the CETT program.

Agreements that require action

- PUCMM distributed a document with the desired teacher profiles and expects feedback from the rest of the group by Friday, July 5.
- PUCMM will prepare a draft of the theoretical framework that will be distributed to the rest of the group for feedback.
- CAII will provide a list of private-sector companies that have shown interest in contributing to the CETT and the kind of contribution they will be willing to give.
- To keep the ministries of education and the national centers informed of the program's progress, USAID will send a letter stating which countries will be hosting the pilots and how national centers will participate in the first year of the program.
- A simultaneous public announcement of the Central American CETT will be made to the press in each consortium member country. To coordinate this activity, USAID will send a note to the local USAID missions and ambassadors announcing that the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and UPN will take place in Honduras.

Agreements about the proposal

- Regarding the contracting process, USAID communicated that:
 - The contracting responsibility of the Central American CETT program has been transferred to USAID Honduras.
 - During the first year of the program, USAID Washington has decided to use a grant as the contracting mechanism instead of a cooperative agreement.
 - USAID Honduras will establish the grants for the first year of the program with each consortium institution responsible for a program component.
 - The cooperative agreement contracting mechanism will be adopted for the four years of the program remaining after the initial planning year.
 - Once the cooperative agreement is in effect, UPN will subcontract with the rest of the consortium institutions with no overhead charge.

- The cooperative agreement mechanism will not require a bidding process for subcontracting with consortium institutions.
- Regarding the budget, USAID confirmed that:
 - o On or about July 10, USAID will decide on the approximate percentage of overhead the participating institutions can include in their budget.
 - Each institution must include in its proposal its own budget for the component it is responsible for, including overhead and the institution's contribution. The institution's contribution can be in-kind (e.g., office space, personnel, equipment, etc).
- USAID established that attendance to conferences and seminars is authorized in so far as it is pertinent and justified in developing the planning activities of the first year. Participation costs should be included in the budget.
- USAID suggested that the final proposal for the first year of the program should be approximately 25 pages in length, but that is not a mandatory limit.
- Regarding the program goals included in the proposal, USAID mentioned that:
 - o The proposal should concentrate on the goals for the first year and not confuse first-year goals with the long-term program goals.
 - The proposal for the first phase of the program does not need to include goals with quantitative figures. The proposal can include figures related to the pilot, but not necessarily specific figures for the first year.
- In writing the proposals for each component, the consortium institutions should:
 - Take the initiative to develop all necessary actions of the program component.
 - Make sure that there is effective coordination among the different components; for example, the institution responsible for the training component should coordinate with the institution responsible for preparation of materials.
 - o Include consultations with the participating (Ps) institutions within each component in the proposals.
 - o Consider appropriate use of technology when developing the proposal.
 - Send the document in Spanish, and UPN will translate the final proposal into English for submission to USAID.
- During the week of July 1-5, UVG will send a list with the priority research areas, as well as the approach for basic research, after which time the rest of the group will provide feedback that will be incorporated into the applied research component.
- ILCE will provide the approximate cost for installation and operation of possible networks to be used by the institutions, based on the minimum technological capacities required.
- UPN's responsibilities regarding the proposal include the following:
 - Prepare a draft of the pilot, which will be circulated among the rest of the institutions for feedback.
 - o Create a timeline for the first year of the program.

- Write a proposal for review by executive committee of the organizational design of the consortium, indicating the functions of the different responsibilities at the varying levels.
- FEPADE will write an integrated piece of the proposal including both the alliances with the private sector and social marketing components.
- CAII will send an example of the line items in a budget.
- USAID informed the meeting participants of the following proposal format to follow:
 - 1. Introduction
 - i. Description of the component
 - ii. Situate the component in the context of the program
 - 2. Planning for the first year
 - i. Activities
 - ii.Expected outputs
 - iii. Vision for the four-year life of project implementation
 - 3. Coordination
 - i. Among the components
 - ii.With ILCE and SEP (Mexico)
 - iii. With U.S. and Central American institutions
 - 4. Timeline
 - 5. Budget
 - 6. Prerequisites

Agreements modifying the conceptual framework submitted June 27

- In the section on selecting pilot schools, change the document to read as follows: schools to participate in the pilot will be selected among those that do not receive support from other projects or donors in reading programs.
- The conceptual framework was also modified consistent with the decision to conduct the pilot in five schools in each of four countries, making a total 20 schools. These countries are El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

Organizational composition of the consortium

- The executive committee of the CETT for Central America and the Dominican Republic will be formed by USAID and one representative (preferably the same one throughout the program) from FEPADE, PUCMM, UPN, UVG, ILCE and SEP (non-voting member.)
- A management unit within UPN will be in charge of the program coordination.
- A technical committee working under the program management unit (at UPN) will be created.
- The level of responsibility of the institutions that are part of the executive committee is not the same as that of the national centers. See annex no. 3.
- Given the importance of the Director of the Project, 3-5 candidates for this position will be submitted by UPN to the executive committee for review. The

- nomination must be unanimously approved by the executive committee. USAID will offer final approval for the hiring of a candidate for this position.
- Each institution's proposal will be sent to UPN by July 15. See next steps.

In order to facilitate communication among the CETT participating institutions, ILCE will send a sample of a communication forum so that consortium members can get acquainted with the system and take advantage of this tool.

Next Steps

Timeline of activities

Responsible Institution	Action	Date
Consortium	Send feedback on the teacher profile document	
institutions	submitted by PUCMM.	7/5/02
USAID	Send approximate overhead percentage to consortium institutions.	7/10/02
Consortium institutions	Write and send section of the proposal on institution's assigned program component, including budget.	7/15/02
USAID and CAII	Travel to Tegucigalpa, Honduras to provide technical support in writing the proposal.	7/15-20/02
UPN	Submit the complete proposal to USAID.	8/15/02

Annex 1: Institutions and Areas of Responsibility P=Participation, R=Responsibility

	P=Participation, R=Responsibility										
Institutions/	PU	F	UP	UV	I	MOE	USAID	National			
Areas of	CM	Е	N	G	L	CECC		Centers			
responsibility	M	P			C	&SEP (in					
		A			Е	Mex)					
		D									
		Е									
1.Links with U.S.			p				R				
institutions											
2.Coordination	P	P	P	P		P	P				
with MOEs											
3.ICT	P		P		R						
4. Social	P	R	P	P	P		P				
marketing											
and											
Alliances with the											
private sector											
5.Program	P	P	R	P	P						
coordination and											
finances											
6.Diagnosis and	P	P	P	R		P					
assessment of											
student reading											
problems and											
performance											
7.Evaluation and	P	P	R	P		P	P				
monitoring of											
program progress											
8. Applied research	P	P	P	R	P						
(philosophy and		-	_		1						
strategy)											
9. Materials	R		P	P	P	P (SEP)					
10.Teacher	P	Р	R	P	P	P					
training (methods	1	1	**	-	1	_					
and content)											
and content)		l	l		<u> </u>		1				

Annex 2:

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR TEACHER TRAINING IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Base

Our proposal is based on the sociological and cultural elements involved in adopting the necessary skills to learn reading. We understand the learning process involved in acquiring these skills as an integral part of the personal development of the individual within society. Educational activities are interwoven in the context where they take place, closely attached to the cultural context and other educational activities where children, teachers, parents, and school administrators interact.

Goal of the program

To achieve excellence in the reading skills of children in grades 1-3 through interventions addressed to teachers and school administrators with a low educational level or located in disadvantaged areas, concentrating the impact in the classroom in support of the concept of reading as a learning instrument.

CETT Beneficiaries in Central America and the Dominican Republic

The direct beneficiaries of the program are teachers in service with different levels of academic background, along with school principals, district directors and technical staff, and other stakeholders.

During the first phase, the program will be implemented through pilots in 20 schools in four countries. In the second year of the program, the tested and validated interventions will be expanded to other schools in both the pilot countries and the remaining countries in the region.

The program will target schools:

- 1. in rural and outlying urban areas whose populations are in socioeconomic disadvantage or whose native language is other than Spanish;
- 2. in school districts with low output levels of education;
- 3. with only one or a few teachers serving the entire school population;
- 4. that do not receive support in reading instruction from other donors; and
- 5. in which teachers show a positive predisposition to participate.

Objectives

The objectives for the first phase (first year) of the program are:

- 1. To define and adopt a theoretical and methodological framework for the program.
- 2. To define a global action plan for program implementation.
- 3. To define the profile of the primary-school teacher with the ideal features to teach reading.
- 4. To develop a database with all the best practices in reading, teaching materials, preservice and in-service teacher training programs, including successful examples of the use of technology in teacher training.
- 5. To develop teaching guides with conceptual and methodological materials for teachers.
- 6. To test the intervention strategy with a pilot project in 20 schools across four countries in the region. The pilots will include research of the process and results.
- 7. To record the experiences and training process to include the appropriate feedback that will improve the decision-making process.
- 8. To develop diagnostic and measurement tools for reading skills to be applied in the classroom.
- 9. To determine the current knowledge in the following areas:
 - a) Teachers' capabilities in teaching reading, and
 - b) Students' principal difficulties when learning to read.
- 10. To develop a social awareness and mobilization program to promote and support reading at the national level and in the communities benefiting from the program, including all potential direct and indirect stakeholders that could participate in the program.

Strategies to guarantee program success

The following strategies are grouped, according to their actions and impact on the success of the program, into three categories: technical, organizational, and policy focus:

Technical:

1. Focus the training at the classroom level.

The priority of the program is to bring about change in teaching practices. The most effective way of doing so is by working directly with teachers in the classrooms.

- 2. Work with in-service teachers initially and later transfer the practices to the preservice teacher training programs.
 - Working with in-service teachers will ensure immediate impact in the classrooms, while subsequent encouragement of practices in pre-service education will impact overall teacher training and practices in the classroom.
- 3. Develop a regional, unified model flexible enough to include the cultural diversity of the participating countries.
 - The program will develop a model that is low cost, appropriate, and specifically centered on the improvement of reading skills. This model will facilitate community strengthening among the countries participating in the program and will encourage respect for cultural diversity among participants.
- 4. Develop and establish a training model for the pilot project that will be expanded only after having tested its effectiveness.
 - This strategy is aimed at reducing the risk of expanding a program where the success in achieving the intended goal has not been tested. Testing will enable a successful replication of the model.
- 5. Incorporate practical and technically innovative school practices that have proven successful.
 - Prior training and experiences that have proven successful, but for whatever reason were not previously continued nor propagated, will be used and adapted, with the additional advantage of reducing costs.
- 6. Develop monitoring and evaluating systems.
 - The purpose of these systems is to generate pertinent information to enable better decision making.
- 7. Utilize technological resources to train teachers.
 - This strategy will increase access for participants, enable a wider-reaching impact, and improve the program's efficiency by reducing costs and selecting appropriate technology for the different characteristics and profiles of the beneficiary groups.
- 8. Establish mechanisms to facilitate teaching instruction.
 It is necessary to take into consideration actions addressed at improving the social value of teachers, their sense of professional advancement, and the integration of the school in the community.
- 9. Work in collaboration with U.S. and other countries' institutions specialized in the teaching of reading.

Organizational:

1. To develop a base of solidarity and trust among the member institutions of the consortium to facilitate the efficient development of the program.

Define operational limits corresponding to each institution within the framework of the consortium (e.g., the adoption of a process for program implementation) that will encourage the development of a corporate identity among all participants. This strategy also requires a reliable flow of communication among the parties.

- 2. To develop an organizational working structure of the program to utilize the already existing capacities and resources of the institutions.
- 3. To develop participatory working mechanisms generating opportunities for the program and assuring its sustainability.
- 4. To introduce a systemic focus on program actions. Given its complexity, the program should create conditions that foment synergy.

Policies:

- 1. To develop strategic alliances between the members of the consortium and institutions in the countries.
 - This strategy will legitimize the processes so that the institutions can gain ownership of the program.
- 2. To establish and strengthen strategic alliances of public-private cooperation in the education sector.
 - These alliances will strengthen a trustworthy environment between the sectors, while at the same time mobilizing private resources to support education.
- 3. To support current educational reform efforts led by the MOEs of the countries. It is understood that this program is a contribution to the solution of the bigger problem of educational quality.
- 4. To promote a vision of regional integration by realizing and taking advantage of the potential of economic, political and social opportunities.

 The purpose is to strengthen the capacity by uniting the countries in one consortium and recognizing the advantages of block negotiating.
- 5. To develop the social and economic value of reading by proving the relationship between reading skills and the increase of social mobility possibilities for program beneficiaries.
- 6. To establish participation mechanisms for teachers' associations to the greatest extent possible. Each institution will decide the actual feasibility of this activity.

Annex 3:

CETT CONSORTIUM FOR CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

